

## DREARY NIGHT WINDS.

Dreary night winds, why are you sighing,  
Whispering to me, "I wish you knew well?  
Do you know the weight of the dead or dying—  
Say, oh, my night winds, can you tell?"  
Sad to see your moanings sound,  
Said a minor strain in a plaintive song,  
Touching the heart by a hidden wound,  
Holding it spellbound fast and long.  
  
Dark to me, night winds, I would speak:  
List to me, night winds, I need call,  
Though I am a mortal, yet I need  
A voice from the spirit land to recall.  
What still you murmur, mourners' one—  
What end come and last to me!  
Would not a moment for one that has gone  
To the home of the soul for eternity.

Well, perhaps 'tis best that I hear no more  
Those voices that were meant for his to me,  
'Twas only now that I had learned here  
To sing the lullaby of memory.  
By the lulling leaves on the dark tree tops,  
With the winds unclouded and free,  
Nature will I seek you your whispers to stop,  
But let my man on in conspiracy.  
—Anne V. Kase to Chicago Herald.

## THE PRIEST'S BRIDGE.

There can be little doubt that the noblest plan, the saintliest man, who ever lived in Mexico was Juan de Nava. Indeed, it would be hard to find, in any clime or generation, under what adverse conditions, a soul of greater purity and self-sacrifice, a creature in whom the flesh and its constant evil and vagaries were more completely subjugated by the domination of a serene and lofty spirit.

Juan de Nava was a man of gentle birth and breeding, his right to the title of Don was absolute and hereditary, not earned nor honorary. He had been reared in influence, won every advantage of environment and culture inherent in his day, and he had some years attained his majority when he entered the priestly calling. He entered the clergy with volumes, deliberation and system, as he was wont to apply these traits to every act and situation; and none ever knew what motives impelled him—and none ever guessed in the deals are behind those offerings.

The old man fell like a log at the feet of his assassin.

Domingo Sarraza made a great effort to detach the dagger, and finding it futile, gathered in his arms the body, so little of weight in its attenuation, and hurled it over the parapet into the canal beneath.

At home Beatriz de Milian waited for her adopted father, who returned to her never again.

Never had Mexico been so excited and taken as over the mysterious disappearance of Juan de Nava. There was no system of police, save the body of sergents—the night watchmen—who were a shade worse than nothing, since they never dreamed of interfering in the nefarious transactions of night birds, whereas their lanterns often served as auxiliaries to evil doers. But volunteer searchers turned out by hundreds and scoured every quarter where it was imagined the old man might have fallen alone, a victim of sudden illness. For it was not even remotely imagined that foul play could have touched him, as he was by all and known to all the city. But the waters of the canal were silent, and the echoes of the bridge, and Domingo Sarraza, too, knew how to keep his guilty secret.

Thus the matter passed among the unfathomable mysteries. Beatriz de Milian, ever mourning over the unknown fate of the missing man, and left quite alone in the world, took the veil at Santa Teresa, though more than one was open to her, for her own sake and the sake of Juan de Nava.

Years passed. The memory of the priest had become a sort of legend of holiness, and his adopted daughter was forgotten. Domingo Sarraza lived, still kept his youthful semblance, and still continued to youth the tastes of the day were not squeamish, and a reputation for gallantries and rashness was then as now deemed a feather in the cap of a man, rather than otherwise. There was Diego de Fajardo, and Luis del Rio, Antonio Madero, Torres, and a score of others, the idols of the city, notwithstanding—perhaps, indeed, because of—their wild bouts and excesses. But Sarraza was not of them. There was a malady in his veins that repelled the others happy-go-lucky young fellows that they were, and they shrank from his companionship. He got a good many disdainful names, too, from them—"the friar," "the pious one," and divers such pseudonyms, in consequence of his hypocritical zeal in church matters. In former days his blasphemies had been so rank and blatant that he had been threatened that he should expiate them in the hogeria, the burning place of the inquisition, in front of San Diego, where now run the leathery walls of the pleasant Alameda. Such a menace from the holy office might well intimidate the bravest man in those days, and Domingo Sarraza was no hero. He hastened to feign a serious frame of mind, to pretend conversion and repentance, and to perform all the churchly offices, to avert the realization of the sinister prophecy. By day and by night he wore a cross on his bosom, and as regularly as the day rolled around, he attended mass like any levite. It was thus spurious piety, perhaps, that was most distasteful to those who should have been the associates of Sarraza, but it was not altogether cowardice that kept him in the path he followed, although this had been the original impelling motive. It was that the dames and damsels of Mexico ascribed most freely, and in church or on the way thence or thither that they were most easy of access for the utterance of an initiatic gallantry or the tendering of a tentative missile. By no means the fewest of Domingo Sarraza's adventures had been since he had adopted his new mode of life, and he grew, if such a thing was possible, more corrupt and evil, in view of the immunity he enjoyed, protected by his cloak of pious seeming.

It was in great measure this poverty that determined his place of abode. The Spanish conquerors, having razed the Aztec city, filling up the canals with its debris, had marked out for themselves a district, outlined by a deep cutting called La Traza, the which was spanned by a few bridges leading to the outlying quarters, where dwelt the Indian population, who, for fear of robbery or insurrection, were forbidden to remain within La Traza after certain hours of the evening. The good priest Juan de Nava, left beyond the Traza, among the Indians, who were his chief interest, this party for the sake of the influence to be maintained by constant association, and partly because of his extreme poverty, which precluded his dwelling within the city. The power of the bridge was open to him at all hours, and he came and went at midnight frequently, as he moved through the most desolate and dangerous quarters of the city, which had by this time come to have a quite enviable reputation. The lowest and most vicious of the people beat before him, and ran to kiss his hand, as he passed among them full of reverence for his spirit that emanated from their most dreadful and revolting features.

And, save the light of his own charities and benevolences, there was no brightness in the life of Juan de Nava till the day that Beatriz de Milian came to him. He stood in a wary street, admonishing with gentle severity an Indian who had been beating his donkey, when the child approached, a slender, delicate creature, and timidly asked an alms. The priest looked long in her face as he questioned her. The story she told, if sad enough, was simple. She had lived in a great city, different from this, and less ugly. She had come in a great ship, and her mother had died on the water. Her father had been with her far a time here in Mexico, but one day he had gone away, and she had not been able to find him. Juan de Nava took the child by the hand, and led her to where simple, wholesome food was set before her, and when she had satisfied her bitter hunger, he took her across the Traza, to his own poor home, that should be hers thereafter.

There was something of a change came into his life from this day. He spared himself no more than of old, but he varied his labors. He returned to his home at such hours as were most suitable for the hearing of lessons, and the training he gave to Beatriz was done

and thorough. And the hours of instruction concluded, Juan de Nava again bent his steps back to the teeming streets, overcrowded with a population of the most miserable of God's creatures, among whom he labored often until long past midnight. As may be supposed, as his adopted daughter grew toward womanhood, the good priest could but perceive that he must not leave her at home, alone and unprotected. Therefore, he increased his household by the addition of an aged woman, the mother of one of his confidantes, who was but too happy to encounter such a refuge, and hence to Beatriz de Milian the protection of her presence.

The priest's adopted daughter grew up a noble woman. Not a lady of the vice regal court could compare with her in beauty, yet she was modest and retiring as any mountain violet, as if she had lived in a world apart from that city of feverish loves and hates, ambitions, intrigues and gallantries. She was more learned than most men in those days of careless ignorance, yet skilled in all womanly knowledge. The nuns of a convent, where Juan de Nava was confessor, had taught her the cunning of their broderies and all manner of handwork, and the simple fare and the delicate care-taking of Juan de Nava's household was all the work of the maid.

Withal, she was devout and pious. Her guardian had taught her that, while good works are of greater import than all the forms of observance, somewhat of the daily doing of offices is useful, if but for the sake of example. Therefore, she rose betimes, and went to hear early mass. She had long knelt at the altar of one of the minor churches, near the dwelling of her guardian; but the suburb grew disorderly, and more than once unseemly drunken brawls had been brewing at the very door of the temple. Therefore, Juan de Nava bade his ward go rather to San Hipolito, somewhat farther within the city.

And there it was that Beatriz was first seen of Domingo Sarraza, "the religious rake," as his viceregal called him, in converse with the older Amasa. He was of noble birth, this cavalier, this young prodigie of the first water, and youthful as he was handsome. He spent his money in torments, on every caprice, on every extravagance of luxury and ostentation. His was the most gorgeous caravanseria of the annual festival of El Pueblo, and to say this implies, indeed, much. On these occasions, on the 15th of August every year, the day of San Hipolito, El Pueblo—the standard of Cortez was carried in triumph, escorted by a great cavalcade of Spaniards, from the Palacio Municipal to the church of San Hipolito, in commemoration of the fact that on this date Cortez achieved the final capture of the Aztec city. And to shine pre-eminent in these processions was the ambition of every young Spaniard in Mexico, and each tried to outlive all others in the sumptuousness of his appointments. But, year after year, notwithstanding the efforts of his competitors, the palm for elegance and costumes fell to the share of Domingo Sarraza.

But all his lavish expenditure nor his affectations of jovial good-fellowship could make the young man popular. It was not alone that he was a scoundrel of gross vice. Those that might have been overlooked, for the taste of the day were not squeamish, and a reputation for gallantries and rashness was then as now deemed a feather in the cap of a man, rather than otherwise. There was Diego de Fajardo, and Luis del Rio, Antonio Madero, Torres, and a score of others, the idols of the city, notwithstanding—perhaps, indeed, because of—their wild bouts and excesses.

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He saw not her face, for she was closely veiled, but the charming grace of her movements and the elegance of her figure gave for Domingo Sarraza the assurance of great beauty. He was hattered, too, by the continuity with which she cast upon him stolen glances that burned through the lace of her veil, and the mystery of this behavior heightened the charm of her. He followed her out of the church, across the plaza through the trellis streets, and before he knew his bearings he found himself upon the bridge across the Traza, where he had not set foot since the death of Juan de Nava.

The woman paused before him, and let him approach her.

"I dare not linger now," she murmured, "there are people coming, and I am in danger. I will meet you here at midnight. We will be safe when the bridge is deserted." And she glided on like a moving shadow, and was lost to the sight of Sarraza.

The man was filled with misgiving and terrors, but he was also bewitched by the nameless charm of the unknown woman. Thus it was that he found himself impelled, albeit, indeed, against his own will, to keep the secret of her identity, and to keep the trust upon the bridge at midnight.

The clocks were striking the hour as he reached the spot, for he had dallied, hoping that the lady might be before him; but the bridge was empty. The violence of the passing was the only evidence of his presence.

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